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RUYNAAAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA PRIORITY  
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RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 3870  
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 5800  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 8835  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0819  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 2034  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 6880  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 7572  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

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STATE FOR I/RF, PA/PR/FPC/W, IIP/G/EA, EAP/PD, R/MR,  
EAP/J, EAP/P, PM;  
USTR FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;  
TREASURY FOR OASIA/IMI;  
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA;  
CP BUTLER OKINAWA FOR AREA FIELD OFFICE;  
PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - THAI ELECTION AND  
INSTABILITY IN IRAQ

LEAD STORIES: Most Thursday morning papers led with an approval by the education minister of Japanese history textbooks for high school students, which specify the involvement of the Imperial Japanese Army in the mass suicides of Okinawa residents in the waning days of WWII.

1. "Ensure Political Stability after Election"

The business-oriented Nikkei editorialized (12/27):  
"The People Power Party that supports former Prime Minister Thaksin won a plurality in the Thai general election. While there is the possibility that the party may lose several seats due to vote violations, it appears to be securing a comfortable majority through holding coalition negotiations with other groups. Thailand's political situation is heading toward stability with a new government in the making led by the pro-Thaksin forces.... It is true that the former prime minister was heavily criticized for his corruption and disregard for King Bhumibol. However, the election results pointing to the Thai people's rejection of a junta government must be respected. The nation has witnessed the military's repeated interference into politics whenever it suffered from economic slowdown and faced corruption scandals. The time has come for Thailand to put an end to the vicious cycle of political interference by the military and to foster democracy through public participation in the political process."

2. "Growing Presence of Sunni Militias" A Cairo-based

reporter for the top-circulation, moderate Yomiuri wrote (12/27): "The Shiite-led Iraqi government is having a difficult time in the face of a growing presence of Sunni armed groups, which have been beefed up by the U.S. military in countering al-Qaeda insurgents. The clout of the Sunni militia called 'Awakening Council' is rapidly expanding due to its significant contribution to the recent improvement of the security situation. As the U.S. military plans to scale down its troops in Iraq next year, concerns are mounting that the Council will clash head-on with Shiite militias and the Shiite-controlled Iraqi military and that their religious rivalry may develop into civil war."

DONOVAN